

Act, BCA, and \$31 billion above the administration's budget request. If the authorized funding level were to be appropriated, without changing the caps, it would trigger a 12-percent across-the-board sequester of Defense programs to bring spending levels back to the Fiscal Year 2018 levels contained in the Budget Control Act. A sequester of this size would hit us in readiness. It would hamper our day-to-day operations and maintenance. It would hurt our troops. Our military leaders do not support such a sequester.

If we really want to support our military and the men and women in uniform, we must immediately reach a bipartisan budget deal to lift the artificial and unrealistically low budget caps that were set in law in 2011. It is hard to get every Member of this Chamber to agree on anything, but on this, we can agree: Sequester has had a negative impact on our country that will impact a generation. We need to have an honest conversation about what the needs of our country are, both in military and domestic spending, and draft our spending bills accordingly.

I do appreciate the work that Senator McCAIN and Senator REED have put into this massive legislation. While my concerns with the funding levels authorized in this bill prevent me from supporting it, I do believe it reflects a strong commitment to the programs and policies that support our service members and their families. That must always be our goal.

I am pleased that the conferenced bill maintains support for medical research that matter so much to our servicemembers and to all Americans who benefit from the lifesaving results made possible through these programs. I am also grateful for the inclusion of language I authored that would pave the way for piloting a preventative mental health program for our National Guard and Reserve. Like physical health, we know that, with particular training and mental preparation, a person can be more resilient mentally when faced with challenges, and building that readiness is necessary to maintain the all-volunteer force. Progress is already being made with shifting to a preventative model in the Special Forces community. I hope to soon see similar progress in developing models for the members of our Guard and Reserve.

This final bill also includes several amendments I proposed to make sure U.S. efforts, especially in Afghanistan, are consistent with U.S. values. These include a provision aimed at improving the way the Departments of Defense and State provide human rights training to partner forces, and a requirement to establish a plan on how to improve our ability to help foreign governments protect civilians. The final bill also authorizes establishment of a position in the Department of Defense to oversee its implementation of and coordination with the Department of State on the Leahy law for human

rights vetting for Afghan security forces.

In 3 weeks and 1 day, the current resolution funding our government will expire; yet, instead of sitting down with Democrats to work together, just as we did earlier this year to enact the fiscal year 2017 omnibus spending bill, to find a path forward to raise the budget caps and fund our government for the rest of the fiscal year, Republicans are focused on a tax cut bill that will add \$1.5 trillion to the debt. Instead of acting responsibly and in the greatest traditions of the Senate, the majority is marching towards another partisan fight on the floor on a deeply flawed tax bill that will impact every corner of our economy.

Let's get to work for the American people. For months, have been calling for a bipartisan budget deal to lift the caps on both sides for both defense and nondefense programs based on parity. It is time to complete those negotiations. We owe it to the men and women who serve. We owe it to the American people.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be considered yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is on agreeing to the conference report.

The conference report was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume executive session.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time on the Coggins and Friedrich nominations is yielded back.

#### VOTE ON COGGINS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Coggins nomination?

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. McCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 280 Ex.]

#### YEAS—96

Alexander	Flake	Nelson
Baldwin	Gardner	Paul
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Perdue
Bennet	Graham	Peters
Blumenthal	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Harris	Reed
Boozman	Hassan	Risch
Brown	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heinrich	Rounds
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Rubio
Capito	Heller	Sanders
Cardin	Hirono	Sasse
Carper	Hoeben	Schatz
Casey	Inhofe	Schumer
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott
Cochran	Johnson	Shaheen
Collins	Kaine	Shelby
Coons	Kennedy	Stabenow
Corker	King	Strange
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Tester
Cotton	Leahy	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	Markey	Udall
Donnelly	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McConnell	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Enzi	Moran	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Fischer	Murray	Young

#### NOT VOTING—4

Booker	McCain
Franken	Menendez

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 481, Gregory Katsas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Gregory G. Katsas, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby